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Stephen Warrell  
Head of School  
Weobley Primary School  
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Dear Mr Warrell

### **Short inspection of Weobley Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 27 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in October 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Leaders, staff, governors and parents and carers all agree that Weobley is a friendly, happy and inclusive school. Parents especially value the way the school promotes their children's all-round development and the way that staff nurture and support individuals. They recognise the care and attention that is given to everyone. Several parents mentioned that you and other members of staff are approachable and that you willingly take time to help sort out any minor problems. They particularly appreciate that you know every child by name, and that you greet them when you are out and about in the playground at the start and end of the day. One parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'This is how all schools should be. It is well balanced, both for pupils and parents. I am extremely happy to have my children start their education there.'

During the inspection, the pupils were unfailingly polite, friendly and welcoming. They were keen to talk about their work and to tell me, for example, exactly how to do long multiplications and how to check that my answer is right. The pupils who read to me did so with confidence and evident pleasure in reading. In lessons, pupils were eager to get on with their tasks and responded quickly to instructions from their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils try hard and persevere with tasks, even when they find them challenging.

Your enthusiasm and commitment to the school and your high expectations of

everyone are evident. There is a strong team spirit at Weobley. All of the staff who responded to the survey said that they are proud to work at the school, and that they enjoy their jobs. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and supportive. There is a good climate for learning in lessons; as one parent put it, 'There is a relaxed but professional atmosphere.'

By the end of Year 6, pupils typically achieve well. The school's results have been above both local and national figures for the past two years, meaning that pupils are very well prepared for the move to secondary school. Pupils make strong progress across key stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in mathematics has been in the top 20% in the country for the past two years.

You, other leaders and governors know the school well. Your self-evaluation is accurate, and areas for further development are the right ones. The areas of relative weakness that are pointed out in the last section of this letter came as no surprise to you and the governing body.

You have a wealth of information about pupils' attainment and progress at your fingertips. In discussions with teachers, you make good use of this information to decide on the next steps for individual pupils, to make sure that no one falls behind. During the inspection, we discussed ways of maximising the use of the information, for example, by drawing together a mid-year summary of the progress of groups to present to governors.

Since the school was last inspected, it has entered a federation with the adjacent high school. This has been a positive move. Parents mentioned that their children benefit from the sharing of expertise and specialist teaching, and that they are well prepared for the transition to high school. Both schools benefit from the experienced, knowledgeable and enthusiastic governing body and the skills of the executive headteacher.

You and the staff have dealt successfully with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. There are no substantial differences between the attainment of boys and girls in writing. Teachers make sure that everyone holds a pencil correctly. Pupils' handwriting is improving as a result. The youngest pupils do physical exercises to help develop their motor skills and control. Teachers routinely ask questions that require pupils to think and explain their answers. Teachers make sure that the work pupils are asked to do is appropriately challenging.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a strong safeguarding culture at Weobley. You and the governing body have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You check that staff know and understand exactly what they need to do should they have a concern about a child. You and the staff have a good knowledge of individual pupils and their circumstances. You take all appropriate steps to protect those who may be potentially vulnerable.

You record concerns and the action taken as a result using a secure online system. This means that the records relating to individual pupils are very well organised and readily accessible to those who need to read them. You are tenacious in following up issues with the local authority where necessary.

Parents and staff agree that pupils are kept safe at school and are well looked after. You and the staff help pupils to know how to keep themselves safe. Your planned programme of assemblies includes a range of topics related to personal safety, including online safety. You also organise bespoke sessions in response to issues that arise.

## **Inspection findings**

- You and the staff are acting with determination to improve the quality of teaching and learning in phonics and reading in key stage 1 and the early years. You have recognised that, although pupils build steadily on their prior attainment, some pupils do not make the swift progress that is needed to catch up and match the performance of seven-year olds nationally.
- In order to give children the best possible start, you have established separate Nursery and Reception classes, and have begun to admit two-year olds. Staff have started to teach letters and the sounds they make in the Nursery class as well as in Reception. Pupils in Year 1 are taught phonics in two short sessions daily, rather than one longer one. These actions are starting to have an impact. Your assessments show that the proportion of pupils on track to meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check this year is greater than last year. The proportion of pupils on track to reach the expected standard in reading at the end of Year 2 is also increasing.
- You know that further action needs to be taken to speed up the pace of improvement across the early years and key stage 1. For example, although it has been enhanced, the Nursery classroom does not yet offer children a stimulating, language-rich environment. Occasionally, staff do not model the sounds of letters with precision and accuracy. Finally, the targets that have been set for pupils' achievement at the end of Year 2 are cautious, rather than realistically challenging.
- You keep a close eye on the progress of every disadvantaged pupil. If any appear to be at risk of falling behind, you discuss the next steps with teachers. You also check very carefully how pupil premium funding is spent to make sure that every pupil who is disadvantaged receives their entitlement. This gives you and governors a clear indication of value for money and the impact of the strategies used to support individuals.
- Disadvantaged pupils make progress across the school that, overall, is in line with that of other pupils. Where they do not, there are usually other, external factors that have affected their achievement. However, because pupils make progress at a broadly similar rate, those who have lower starting points do not catch up rapidly with other pupils.
- As noted in the first section of this letter, for the past two years pupils' progress

in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been significantly above average. There are several reasons for this. The first is that the school's inclusive and enabling culture has made sure that pupils develop a strongly positive 'can-do' attitude to their work in mathematics. They do not see mathematics as difficult or stressful. Pupils enjoy their work in mathematics. Some said to me that they know they have to make mistakes in order to learn. Others said that their work in mathematics can be challenging, but that is what they like about it. In addition, teachers are skilled and knowledgeable. They adjust their teaching to take account of how well pupils are learning, changing groupings where necessary and being flexible in providing additional support. Lessons are tailored to pupils' needs. This all has a very positive impact on pupils' achievement in mathematics.

- In the past, the proportion of pupils who have received a fixed-term exclusion has been above that typically seen in primary schools. The rate of exclusion has dropped considerably over the past 18 months. It now occurs very rarely and is a last resort. You have taken effective steps to make sure that those pupils who have difficulty in managing their behaviour are given the guidance and support they need to help them stay in lessons. You know that a significant proportion of pupils struggle sometimes with their emotions and feelings. Staff are currently undertaking training to learn how to provide even better support for such pupils. You are soon to launch a specific programme to help pupils with their particular needs.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they review the targets for the attainment and progress of pupils at the end of key stage 1 to make sure that they are appropriately challenging and represent strong progress across the key stage
- they build on the improvements that have already been made in the teaching of phonics, by making sure that all adults pronounce sounds precisely and accurately and ensuring that the Nursery environment is stimulating, exciting and language-rich
- they strive to make sure that disadvantaged pupils make even stronger progress in order to catch up more quickly with the attainment of other pupils.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Herefordshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

At the start of the morning, we spoke about the lines of enquiry for the inspection and agreed a plan for the day. I met the staff group and toured the school, visiting all classrooms and the breakfast club.

We visited classrooms together to look at teaching and learning in phonics and mathematics. I spoke to pupils as they were working. Four pupils from Years 3 and 5 read to me. I spoke with you about the school's approach to safeguarding, the management of behaviour and support for disadvantaged pupils. We looked at a selection of pupils' books from Year 2. I had discussions with the chair and two other members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I looked at the record of recruitment and vetting checks. I looked at a range of other documents, including those on the school's website. I considered the responses of 18 members of staff to the online questionnaire along with the responses and comments of 80 parents who completed the Parent View survey.